

Innocent Bystanders Discuss 1921 From Blue Viewpoint

Club's Most Cheerful Member Proves to Be the One With a Boil Who Fell a Victim of Bandits and Is Glad

By SAMUEL M'COY.

NOW that we are fairly well into its first month it may as well be admitted that this new year is bound to bring a heap of trouble along with it. For instance, what with the way the world is behaving, you're just as apt to go color blind as not. Russia is red, England is already purple in the face and the United States is turning blue.

A discussion of the outlook for the year at the Innocent Bystanders Club brought out the fact that all the members believe that money may be tighter during 1921, but that skirts can't be.

It also was agreed that a frightful loss of life will be witnessed among women who became 29 years old last year. Not a one of them will have a birthday during 1921.

Merchants dealing in frankfurters will go, as usual, to the dogs.

Mid pleasures and palaces, though Babe Ruth may roam, it's a cinch he will warble "There's no place like home!"

Even if they print the blue laws on litmus paper they'll never be read.

About the only thing you'll be able to buy for a nickel this year is a bag of peanuts to feed to the other squirrels.

That poet D'Annunzio thought he wrote one grand sweet song at Fiume—until he looked at the meter.

The domestic outlook would be brighter if they could only work out some way to make babies pay as they enter.

You can safely say that there won't be one born this year who won't cry for a change.

Well, why shouldn't Mr. Harding put a woman in his Cabinet? Bluebeard put a dozen in his.

When the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock it was wet; but they landed on it awful hard.

The almanacs say the summer will be dry—mostly.

Any one who sees the sea serpent this year will be pinched by the revenooers.

Well, there's one thing about filling in an income tax report—it's great training for fishermen.

Anyway, they can't tax a smile.

If that girl on the next block doesn't get married this year she's going to vote for socialism.

Walter Jings says he's seen a lot of geese going South this January and knows some of 'em personally.

There's no use talking about prosperity till you get your shoes half soled.

When all's said and done, the woman who washes her own dishes ain't a Bolshevik just because her knuckles are red.

If they only find out some way to keep the heater pipes from knocking the rest of us can do our share.

It's a curious thing, but Wilbur Putterbaugh, out east o' town, says he'll be too busy raisin' corn this year t' attend any of th' meetin's t' discuss the League of Nations.

What the country needs mostly is a scheme to make soporose gargle secretly.

There seems to be no hope for an old fashioned mother t' interest her daughter in square dances this year.

Our genial chief of police, Hen Miller, wishes t' announce that th' comin' months will afford a splendid opportunity t' many of our prominent burglars t' do their Eastern shoppin' early.

The pennant in the League of Nations will go to the team that plays all its games on its home grounds.

SO much for the outlook for the year. All would have been merry as a convention of ex-bartenders had it not been for the experience related to the Innocent Bystanders Club by James McCann.

Mr. McCann is the largest, and also the most timid, member of the club—and it is a club made up of timid men. He hasn't even enough nerve to protest when his wife tells him to wear the necktie his Aunt Edie made for him out of an old blouse.

Mr. McCann said, (timidly clearing his throat) that he had had a remarkable experience the night before. It was this: He had been obliged to work at the office until a late hour that night. His work progressed very slowly, because he could not keep his mind on it. And he could not keep his mind on it for the very good reason that his mind was roosting on a very definite thing—this being a boil. It occupied almost all of the back of his neck and seven-eighths of his tottering intellect.

This uninvited little playmate had been



"Wilbur Putterbaugh says he'll be too busy raisin' corn this year t' attend any of th' meetin's t' discuss the League of Nations."

his guest for the preceding three days. He thought of little else, and strove eagerly, in a thousand little ways, to keep it contented and quiet. Mr. McCann nursed it more tenderly than a dying match. By a series of careful experiments he had at last discovered the precise angle at which to thrust his neck forward so as to keep the thing from being assaulted by his collar, and for three days he had gone about with the awkward pose of an unhappy hen peering through a picket fence. A pained and apprehensive expression had glued itself to his face, so that he habitually wore the look of a man who thinks he may have sat down in a platter of ice cream at a tea party, but is afraid to verify the rumor.

What he dreaded more than anything else in the world was to have the thing lanced. He knew it was ready, but that he was not. The very thought sent cold shivers through him, and he admitted this. The necessity worried him so that he actually tried to deceive himself. He told himself that if it had been simply a toothache he would have gone to the dentist and had it out without a moment's hesitation. This was an untruth; but it goes to show Mr. McCann's state of mind.

More than that, he hated to spend the money. The job would cost him at least \$3, and he told himself that he couldn't afford it. Three dollars was too much. Everything cost so much that a man had no money at all left for luxuries like boils. Three dollars! Well, it was awful, but he would have to spend it, and spend it pretty quick, too. He would go to the doctor the next day and have both operations over with.

At 11 o'clock Mr. McCann finally closed his desk and started home. He got outdoors and discovered that a cold drizzle of sleet was falling. One of his shoes was worn through the sole, and he immediately got that foot wet. He had three blocks to walk to get to a street car, and between being

tired out with working so late, the steadily painful presence back of his ear, his leaky shoe and the necessity of limping three blocks through the slush, Mr. McCann would have sold his interest in the universe for a lead nickel.

Suddenly a new alarm smote him, as he plodded along through the darkness and rain. There had been several hold-ups of late in the town. Mr. McCann recollected with an awful sinking feeling that he had drawn his week's salary, amounting to all of \$19.50 in cash, that very day, and that it now reposed in his right hand trousers pocket. What if they took it away from him? He burst into a cold sweat at the very thought. He was sure he saw dark figures skulking in every doorway. Well, there was one thing certain, and that was that his money had no business in the pocket where it now was. Hastily he shifted it, thrusting the bills deep into a secret pocket under his belt. The half dollar he allowed to stay where it was. "If they go through my pockets," he told himself, craftily, "they'll find that and think it's all I've got. Let 'em have it!"

Painfully, with his stiff neck thrust out at its accustomed angle, Mr. McCann went on through the dark, his heart beating loudly. One block, and no bandits. Two blocks, and still safe. Three—

But just at that moment two blobs of darkness moved from the dark alleyway ahead and stood in front of him. Mr. McCann's hands went up unthinkingly. He tried to say, "Hello, boys," in a careless, friendly way, but his voice had disappeared. They apparently did not notice the matter. They worked fast. One of them went through Mr. McCann's pockets with the swiftness of long practice.

The 50 cent piece was found, but, to Mr. McCann's intense relief, the rest of his treasure was overlooked. A hoarse voice,

"If the girl on the next block doesn't get married this year she's going to vote for Socialism."

demanded if that was all he had. Mr. McCann's parched throat was unable to frame so much as a whisper in reply. He stood, with his hands still uplifted, his neck thrust forward, and even in this critical moment

he was chiefly hoping that his collar wouldn't touch that boil again. His assailants looked at him in disgust, and his attitude seemed to destroy their last shred of patience. "Aw, leave him alone!" said one.



This is the last that Mr. McCann remembers. But when he came back to consciousness an hour later and got himself together and reviewed the evidence and joyfully found that his \$19 was still safe in the inside pocket and that the birds were singing he also found that he was ahead of the game by just \$2.50. He wouldn't have to pay the doctor a nickel.

The blackjack had landed just in the right spot.

He says now that it doesn't need any courage at all to get rid of a boil, and that there is a lot of nonsense talked about the depravity of holdup men. They really are, says Mr. McCann, public benefactors.

One tries hard to cultivate a cheery outlook for the new year, but it is hard to believe that Harvey G. Maple will ever do anything except pull toward himself whenever he tries to go out of a door plainly labelled "PUSH."

Birds and Sweets

THE experiments of an amateur naturalist in feeding ruby throated humming birds from bottles of sugar syrup placed inside artificial flowers throw an interesting light on the memory of these tiny birds. The experiments covered a period of at least seven years; the original aim of the feeding was to attract the humming birds to the yard in the hope that they might remain to nest there. The little bottles of syrup were placed in artificial flowers that were made of white olefin, had their edges stiffened with wire and were painted to resemble nasturtiums and tiger lilies.

The first summer only a single bird found the bottled sweets. The next summer two came and the third summer as many as seven birds were present at one time; they were invariably females. A bird consumed about a teaspoonful of sugar in a day. Several facts point to the conclusion that birds of former years returned to be fed. Thus a humming bird was seen thrusting its bill into the bottle on its first observed visit. On another occasion a newly arrived bird buzzed about the observer's head, as no other birds do except those that have had experience of the feeding. Two marvelously long journeys, says the observer, of from 1,000 to 2,000 miles each had this small sprite taken since she had drunk from the bottles; yet she had not forgotten them, nor the one that fed her. She was quite prone to remind the naturalist when the bottles were empty by flying about his head whenever she chanced to find him, whether in the yard or in the street.

Gay Paris Decides to Live a Better Life, but Not a Sombre One

Continued from Third Page.

which these makes appeal has considerably reduced its budget, and as a result there is much idleness in a large section of the automobile industry, which belies the air of general prosperity conveyed by the success of a few large firms in the production of high priced vehicles.

One District in Paris

Retains Its Old Time Charms

But there is one district of Paris which remains unchanged and as attractive to Americans as ever—the de luxe quarters of the Rue de la Paix and the boulevards near the Opera. Here the jewelry and fashions establishments profess to have recovered a large share of their prewar clientele, and although prices have more than quadrupled, there seems to be a constant and wild orgy of buying in these regions, with rich limousines lining the sidewalks throughout the afternoon while their owners order, regardless of price, the chains of pearls and queenly robes which have made these districts famous for more than a century. The dealers themselves complain that their profits are terribly reduced by the increased taxes on de luxe sales, but they never seem to lack the funds necessary to stock their shelves and windows with the costliest creations.

Socialist newspapers of the wilder type

have howled against this increasing expenditure by the richer classes, but it goes merrily on.

Early in December a diamond displayed for a few hours in a Rue de la Paix window at 240,000 francs was sold before nightfall to a French munition millionaire, who is said to have presented it to his mistress on the celebration of ten years of semi-conjugal bliss. While little is said of this traditional French matrimonial duplicity nowadays, it apparently is not diminishing in the classes which are able to stand the expense of maintaining two households, much to the dismay of the moralists who would make Paris a sort of stepping stone to the golden streets of the real Paradise.

Naturally much of the buying in the de luxe quarter is done by representatives of New York and other foreign merchants—but not all of it, by any means. One milliner not far from the Place de l'Opera admits that her sales during 1920 were three times as large as in 1913, while illustrious firms like Paquin, Worth, the Madeleine, Molyneux, &c., admit their season has been exceptionally satisfactory, despite the high prices which were necessitated by exchange fluctuations and the uncertain state of the French textile industry.

Hotels? Yes, Paris has plenty of them, now that the Government offices have been consolidated in more suitable quarters, but the housing shortage in Paris has had the effect of forcing thousands of young couples

to start a French form of light housekeeping in one or two roomed apartments in the cheaper private hotels, rather than pay 1,000 francs a month for a small furnished flat.

But the American visitor usually prefers the well known establishments of the central district, near the shops and theatres and close enough to an American bar to make life interesting. He will find these hotels changed little during the war. There is always the same courteous reception and service, probably a little more system in the control of details making for the comfort of clients, but there is also a very substantial difference in prices.

So far the American plan has not yet abbe thought himself insulted and brought an action for damages, but as he was unable to show any case was dismissed.

A very stout man who bought a third-class ticket at an English railway found that he could not enter the narrow doorway of a third-class compartment. Accordingly, he went into a first-class compartment, the doors of which were wider, and refused to pay the excess fare. The railway company sued him for the balance, and the man had to pay both that and the costs, for the court decided that this could not have been his first offence, and that, knowing that he could not squeeze through the door of a third-class compartment, he ought to have purchased a first class ticket.

After telling a barber to trim his beard, an American fell asleep in the chair. He woke up clean shaven. His beard, twelve inches in length, of which he was very proud, was gone. He sued the barber for \$1,000 and received \$100.

Incidentally American travel agencies have inaugurated special hotel departments during the last year, with representatives on both sides of the Atlantic, so that much of the disagreeable task of seeking accommodation has been eliminated. The voyager merely buys his ticket to Europe at a responsible agency in New York, and in a few days he is notified that rooms in a

certain hotel have been reserved for him from a certain date.

The agency's porters meet him—or her—on his arrival in Paris, convey baggage safely through the customs inspection and effect deliveries, except on rare occasions within five or six hours after the arrival of the "boat train." What a change from the days of lost trunks, interminable debates with uniformed and non-uniformed customs burglars and hours spent in taxiing from one hotel to another in a vain search for moderately comfortable rooms.

All things considered, Paris is not lacking in its interest to Americans if they are only willing to remember that the French nation suffered and gave its best to the world for nearly five years. The change in individual and group mentality is only the logical outcome of the tremendous upheaval of the world's social and economic affairs. But peoples are bound by affections unaltered by such catastrophes, and the transcendent impression, from the viewpoint of those who have looked below the surface of Paris life, is that Paris, with all her faults and with all her promises of reform, has a sincere, hearty and gracious welcome waiting for all who enter her borders, whether it be for pleasure or business, and to those who come on the sadder mission of viewing the resting place of one who, under the Stars and Stripes, fought for the French tricolor, there is always ready a sympathy of understanding and a surety of conscience that will bridge all misunderstandings.

Queer Lawsuits in Various Lands

A FEW years ago a wounded Italian officer brought suit to obtain a decision as to the rightful ownership of a bullet extracted from his body. Both doctor and nurse claimed it, but the officer contended that it was legally his.

The judge gave his decision in favor of the officer. He found that the projectile, once discharged from the gun, ceased to belong both to the man who fired it and to the country that entrusted it to him. The surgeon discovered it in his body. The nurse, assisted by the nurse, merely brought the projectile to light. Hence the officer was entitled to keep it.

When a French abbe left one village to take up work in another the Mayor and the citizens of the town he was leaving litigated a bonfire in the road to speed the departing one, and in other ways showed that they were overjoyed to see the last of him. The

New System Eliminates Many Inconveniences of Ocean Travel

Incidentally American travel agencies have inaugurated special hotel departments during the last year, with representatives on both sides of the Atlantic, so that much of the disagreeable task of seeking accommodation has been eliminated. The voyager merely buys his ticket to Europe at a responsible agency in New York, and in a few days he is notified that rooms in a